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SUBJECT: UN THIRD COMMITTEE TAKES ACTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATIONS
IN MYANMAR, DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA, IRAN, RIGHT TO
FOOD, AND OTHERS

¶1. SUMMARY: On November 19 and 20 the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly took action on 20 resolutions, adopting 14 by consensus and 6 by vote. Two resolutions, the Right to Food and the Rights of the Child, as the U.S. joined consensus for the first time, drew applause from the Third Committee. The U.S. voted against the Russian resolution on contemporary forms of racism, while the EU and others abstained. END SUMMARY.

¶2. During formal meetings on November 19 and 20, the Third Committee adopted by consensus the following resolutions: A/C.3/64/L.12/Rev.1 (strengthening the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Program, in particular its technical cooperation capacity); A/C.3/64/L.15/Rev.1 (international cooperation against the world drug problem); A/C.3/64/L.18/Rev.1 (violence against women migrant workers); A/C.3/64/L.60 (follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly); A/C.3/64/L.28 (promotion of a democratic and equitable international order); A/C.3/64/L.29 (strengthening UN action on human rights through the promotion of international cooperation and the importance of non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity); A/C.3/64/L.30/Rev.1 (the right to food); A/C.3/64/L.40 (Sub-regional Center for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa); A/C.3/64/L.42/Rev.1 (International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance); A/C.3/64/L.9/Rev.1 (implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly); A/C.3/64/L.8/Rev.1 (Proclamation of 2010 as International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding); A/C.3/64/L.50 (Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children); A/C.3/64/L.21/Rev.1 (rights of the child); and A/C.3/64/L.38/Rev.1 (Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms).

¶3. The following six resolutions were adopted by vote: A/C.3/64/L.53 (inadmissibility of certain practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance) with 124-1(U.S.)-55; A/C.3/64/L.57 (use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination) with 122-53(U.S.)-5; A/C.3/64/L.47 (the right to development) with 130-22(U.S.)-30; A/C.3/64/L.35 (situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) with 97(U.S.)-19-65; A/C.3/64/L.36 (situation of human rights in Myanmar) with 92(U.S.)-26-65; and A/C.3/64/L.37 (situation of human rights in Iran) with 74(U.S.)-48-59.

¶4. The arguments and countries who spoke against the three country resolutions were similar in tone and nature. Syria, Libya, Malaysia, Swaziland, Cuba, Nepal, Venezuela, Sudan, and Viet Nam aligned themselves with the delegate from Egypt, who spoke on behalf of the non-aligned movement, and said that such resolutions undermined cooperation and reiterated the importance of the UPR and the HRC. The Bahamas, Costa Rica, Zimbabwe, China, Russia,

Thailand, and Barbados called for a non-confrontational approach that did not interfere with internal affairs of States, was impartial, non-selective, transparent, and did not exploit human rights issues for political purposes. The countries which abstained from voting said that the abstention was no reflection of its position on the human rights situation on the concerned countries. In an EOJ on the situation of human rights in the DPRK, Colombia, India, Bangladesh, and Jordan noted with concern the abduction of Japanese citizens by the DPRK. In a right of reply to Argentina, the U.K. noted that there could be no negotiations on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands until the islanders so wished. Japan and the DPRK had several rights of reply about the abduction issue.

15. Two resolutions, adopted by consensus for the first time, drew applause from the Third Committee. Cuba's resolution, L.30/Rev.1 (Right to Food) had over 150 cosponsors and when adopted by consensus, there was a moment of stunned silence followed by an energetic round of applause. Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Sweden, and Finland gave EOPs after the adoption. USUN Advisor Craig Kuehl delivered the U.S. EOP and noted concern with, as several other country EOPs, the texts of the Doha Round and WTO TRIPs. Resolution L.21/Rev.1 (rights of the child) received a round of applause when it was adopted, for the first time, by consensus. Deputy Representative to ECOSOC John F. Sammis delivered the U.S. EOP and stressed that support for the draft did not imply that States must become party to instruments to which they were not party to before. In an EOP after action, the Syrian delegate reserved the right to interpret certain sections in accordance with its national legislation. Before moving to the next item, the Chair announced that Somalia had become a party to the Rights of the Child to which the Third Committee loudly applauded.

16. The U.S. was isolated with its no vote on resolution L.53 (inadmissibility of certain practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance) sponsored by Russia, although 55 countries abstained. USUN Advisor Laurie Phipps gave the EOJ before the vote and said the U.S. was concerned that the text did not make a distinction between actions and expressions and that the U.S. did not consider the prohibition of expression an effective or appropriate means of eliminating intolerance. The U.S. requested a recorded vote on L.47 (the right to development) which Cuba sponsored. Sweden, Canada, New Zealand, and the U.S. took the floor to explain their "no vote". Deputy Representative to ECOSOC John F. Sammis said that his country did not believe the resolution dealt with the appropriate criteria to evolve a legal standard of a binding nature. Egypt and China spoke in favor of the resolution in an EOJ after the vote.

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